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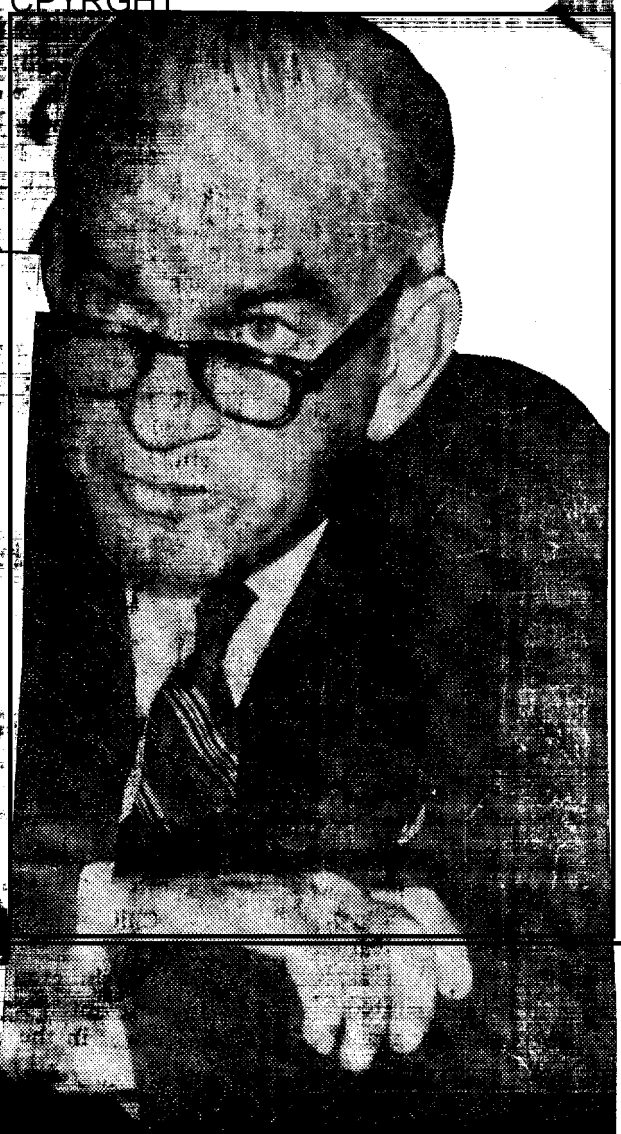
An Insider's View

Fulbright—the Voice of the Opposition



"The basis of my criticism of American policy in Southeast Asia and Latin America is a belief that American interests are better served by supporting nationalism than by opposing communism.... it is neither the duty nor the right of the United States to sort out all these problems for the revolutionary and potentially revolutionary societies of Asia, Africa and Latin America."

Patrick Owens, labor writer for the Free Press, got acquainted with Sen. J. W. Fulbright as a reporter and associate editor of the Arkansas Gazette at Little Rock and as executive editor of the Pine Bluff (Ark.) Commercial. In this searching and revealing report, Owens tells of the thinking behind Fulbright's emergence as a full-fledged critic of the war in Vietnam and explores the personality and political prospects of this unusually complex man.

By Patrick J. Owens
Free Press Staff Writer

Continued

"Assist me up and on the way down
I can shift for myself."—The
More, on the scaffold.

WASHINGTON — J. William Fulbright, the thinking man's Thomas More, is out to save his country from itself. But he is reluctant to be thought a common scold.

At 62, with 25 years in Congress behind him, the junior senator from Arkansas is moving away from his comfortably reflective life to take up the unpopular side on an issue of war and peace.

He has not moved fast, or necessarily with much enthusiasm. He is not at all sure that he likes what his dissent on Vietnam has done to his personal situation in wartime Washington or to his political future in Arkansas. He has tried very hard to avoid making a fool of himself.

Yet move he has.

"The view of communism as an evil philosophy is a distorting prism through which we see projections of our own minds rather than what is actually there," Fulbright said in one of his sterner critiques of the U.S. war effort in Vietnam.

"Looking through the prism, we see the Viet Cong who cut the throats of village chiefs as savage murderers but American flyers who incinerate unseen women and children with napalm as valiant fighters for freedom.

"We see Viet Cong defections as the rejection of Communism but the much greater number of defections from the Saigon army as expressions of a simple desire to return to the farm.

"We see the puritan discipline of life in Hanoi as enslavement but the chaos and corruption of life in Saigon as liberty.

"We see Ho Chi Minh as a hated tyrant but Nguyen Cao Ky as a defender of freedom.

"We see the Viet Cong as Hanoi's puppet and Hanoi as China's puppet but we see the Saigon government as America's stalwart ally.

"And, finally, we see China, with no troops in South Vietnam, as the real aggressor while we, with hundreds of thousands of men, are resisting foreign intervention."

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FULBRIGHT is beset in his cranky constituency back home, by potential political challengers of awesome guile and fierce patriotism. He himself is a zealot for reason and the open mind. The spirit of liberty, he believes with Learned Hand, is the spirit that is not too sure that it is right.

And so he adds: ". . . Whatever the fault may be on our side, the greater fault is with the communists. . . . (Yet) as the most powerful belligerent by far, we are better able to take the initiative in showing some magnanimity, but we are not doing so. Instead, we are treading a strident and dangerous course, a course that is all but unprecedented in American history."

* * *

BILL FULBRIGHT is not a heretic by style or temperament. Arkansas, the poor and crabbed state that has been sending him to the United States Senate since 1944, seems at first glance an improbable breeding ground for the leading critic of [illegible]

How is it that this man, a scholar by temperament and a politician by accident of familial feud, should rise up to decry a war ordered by a president of his own party and sanctioned, apparently, by public opinion?

What is he trying to do?

As chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Fulbright ranks as the leading domestic critic of the war in Vietnam. He is, so far, the nearest thing the nation has to the leader of the nation's anti-war forces.

Not in this century, and seldom in history, has a public official of his rank taken a position so opposed to the national consensus of his time.

What price has he paid, and is he willing to pay for his rebellion?

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THERE IS expert agreement that Fulbright is the best prepared chairman the Foreign Relations Committee has had in generations. But he is an inexpert administrator, a reluctant leader and, by any technical standard, only a semi-competent politician.

The coalition of about a dozen anti-war senators that he nominally heads has never been broken to halter and never will be.

("I supported you," Sen. Wayne Morse of Oregon told Fulbright in an elevator on the way to the Senate floor the other day. "At least they told me I did. I didn't read what you said.")

But despite his failings and the maverick tendencies of his associates, Fulbright has turned his committee into an independent force which has challenged President Johnson on the nation's most important public issue.

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SO FAR, Fulbright has had little visible effect on the war: He keeps deploring it and President Johnson keeps escalating it.

But Fulbright led a successful fight to keep Mr. Johnson from taking a concessional blank check to a Latin American summit meeting in Uruguay in April.

He complains, a bit ingenuously, that Mr. Johnson has been able to expand the Vietnam war because he got a blank check out of Congress on that issue in August of 1964, after "reported" (the qualifying word was Fulbright's) unprovoked attacks on U.S. warships by North Vietnamese PT boats.

"There'll be no more blank checks," Fulbright said the other day.

President Johnson is not a man to brook opposition silently. A year ago, with Fulbright seated several chairs from him at a Democratic head table, the President sprayed Texas sarcasm and threats of political retribution at the "nervous Nellies" who questioned the war.

It is widely believed in Arkansas that Johnson will seek to oust Fulbright from the Senate in 1968.

"I don't think it's a feud," Fulbright says, despite considerable evidence to the contrary. "We just have a policy difference."

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THE BREAK has been painful to Fulbright for several reasons.

He is not a fighter by temperament. He is almost as vulnerable as the next senator to the blandishments of power and social standing, and in Washington a president controls the distribution of many of these.

Johnson's partisans, far more numerous in Washington than elsewhere, have added their jibes to the criticism Fulbright re[illegible] country[illegible] are dying.

In his most ambitious foray into political theory, Fulbright once argued that the Congress must for the good of the country give the President a free hand on foreign policy. Now he has had to abandon his own persuasive thesis. (He has also tended to demonstrate its soundness. In Vietnam, the President has been effectively demonstrating that he can get a free hand on an issue when he wants it.)

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FULBRIGHT, finally, has felt for years a close emotional attachment to Lyndon Johnson.

He was never wholly impressed with the glitter surrounding John F. Kennedy. He thought him stronger on style than substance, and he found the style a bit neon-lit for his own rather bookish tastes.

He fretted about the so-called pragmatism that marked so many of Kennedy's close advisers.

His doubts were confirmed in his own mind when Kennedy rejected Fulbright's objections and approved the Cuban Bay of Pigs invasion early in 1961.

Fulbright alone among the men Kennedy consulted opposed the Bay of Pigs on principle as well as strategy. He feared not that it would fail but that it would succeed. He thought the United States had history enough of overturning Latin American governments by force of arms.

Kennedy knew how to learn from failure. He improved, in Fulbright's view, in the 2½ years left to him after the invasion failed.

* * *

BUT JOHNSON was the ablest politician of his times. The hills of Texas which nurtured him are a day's drive from Fulbright's Ozarks. Their mutual Southwest had forged in each of them shared attitudes about the need to succor the poor while developing the economy and enriching the affluent with everything from rural electrification to full development of natural gas.

What Fulbright, the disciple of Oxford's dons and England's ideologues, didn't know was that Johnson had had only one teacher of government in his life, a crusty old to[illegible] named Howard (Prof.) [illegible] professor at Southwest Texas State Teachers College at San Marcos and in his later years successively an exponent of "fight Russia now" and "fight China now" as U.S. policies.

It would be easy to make too much of Prof. Greene were not his rough-hewn convictions so faithfully mirrored in Lyndon Johnson's foreign policy. If Johnson never swallowed the old Prof. whole, the two men were close, and they shared the Southwest's prevailing assumptions about America's role in a world of lesser peoples.

Flying back to Washington a few weeks ago after a speech at Little Rock, Fulbright sadly recalled with what enthusiasm he had pushed for Johnson over Goldwater in 1964.

"I went much stronger than for Kennedy," he said. "The differences between Johnson and Goldwater were pretty remarkable in their campaign speeches, at least."

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FULBRIGHT is a trim man (170 pounds), a little bigger than average (5-10) with two knees smashed while he was a fullback for the Razorbacks of the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

Most of what is important to Fulbright goes back to Fayetteville and the university, pleasant, tree-shaded places in the Arkansas hills.

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This picture hangs on the wall of Sen. Fulbright's office. The man he's facing is the President, and the note scribbled at the bottom is from LBJ. It says: "To Bill: I can see I haven't been very persuasive."

HE TOLD me now that the Fulbrights were the richest family in town. They did seem, though, to own most everything in sight — the daily paper, the Coke plant, a lumber mill, a tiny railroad, a bank . . .

"Miss Roberta", his mother, was widowed early, after her husband had done a lot of acquiring but hadn't yet made much of anything pay. She became the most important person in Northwest Arkansas, and she published her views daily in the paper.

Fulbright went, inevitably, to the university. Almost as inevitably, he was a very big man on a campus his mother long had shepherded.

"He walked like he owned the place, and he kind of did," recalls a contemporary.

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A RHODES SCHOLAR at Oxford, Fulbright mused on Locke, Hobbes and Mill — the giants of English political theory. He toured Europe as the protege of M. W. Fodor, a distinguished foreign correspondent. He came back to Fayetteville to teach law at the university after a stop in Washington to pick up a law degree, a wife, and brief experience as a New Deal lawyer.

He was president of the university at 34, out at 36, Miss Roberta having slapped up on a new governor, Homer Adkins, by opposing him in the paper. Fulbright ran for Congress almost on a dare, and of course won. Two years later, he was in the Senate, besting Miss Roberta's old foe, Holy Homer, for the job.

He retains an unusual voice, half Ozark and half Oxford. His political thought is hybrid, too.

"He is not a rebel, a dissenter, a crusader or a fighting liberal," I. F. Stone, the radical Washington journalist has written. "He is not a liberal at all. This is the landed civilized gentleman type . . . foreign to the American egalitarian tradition."

BUT FULBRIGHT is not exactly a conservative either. If he has had a public passion, it is for education. "The swinish blight of anti-intellectualism" is a favorite target.

"Civilization," he likes to quote H. G. Wells, "is a race between education and catastrophe."

No country, Fulbright has said several times, ever taxed itself into bankruptcy paying for schools. He has made clear that he was willing to try.

It would be pleasant to report that Fulbright has lived his life above the political battles. Truth is that he has voted the handouts to the oil men and cut the essential political deals with the courthouse rings that dominate Arkansas politics. But he has done so with a certain lordly and redemptive contempt.

And Fulbright has, by some accident of luck and personal style, risen now to a revered position beside the Arkansas Razorbacks football team as a symbol to dirt-poor Arkansas of its better and successful self.

"Arkansas has two things it's proud of — Fulbright and the Hawgs," William P. Rock, long the state's director of industrial development, once said.

* * *

FULBRIGHT'S CAREER has been marked by indiscretion and foresight which have largely obscured his role, up to 1965, as an Establishment figure.

As a freshman congressman, he was able to get a brief resolution passed in 1943 which committed the United States to the principle of a world peacekeeping organization.

He sponsored, and got his name on, the Fulbright program of scholarships for study abroad.

Fulbright was the only senator to vote, just a $214,000 appropriation to continue the investigation of the McCarthy committee.

It was an act of political courage but, as I. F. Stone has written in his brilliant analysis of Fulbright, Fulbright's record on civil liberties in the McCarthy period has been [illegible].

He stayed close to the ground most of the time McCarthy rampaged, as did almost

to save. Yet, Fulbright was deeply offended by McCarthy's efforts to impose ideological conformity on the United States in the name of anti-communism.

The Vietnam war is, in his opinion, both a new kind of McCarthyism—an attempt to clap "Americanism" on a suspicious world by force of arms—and a product of the standard domestic variety.

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FULBRIGHT has always been something of a brooder. As the Vietnam war has cast its growing shadow, he has become more melancholy in his private thoughts.

Not in years has he slept the whole night through. Now his lonely brooding in the night turns more and more on the reasons behind U.S. behavior in Vietnam and the rest of the world.

An austere, even unapproachable man, Fulbright also has reached out in a new way to share his thoughts and his frustrations. Suddenly, he is a man who will talk, and can be talked to, in a way he never was before.

Much of this new kind of talk seems to come to the surface against his better judgment.

To a man who has known him and studied him closely for almost a decade, Fulbright gives the impression of a thinker blinking in daylight at heresies which come to him unbidden in the night.

* * *

LONG SUSPICIOUS of the Central Intelligence Agency, he has fought a series of losing engagements to wrestle congressional supervision of the CIA away from the Armed Services Committee.

With a compromise, Fulbright joined the committee in January. So far, there have been two meetings that Fulbright knows about. And, he says, nothing very useful about CIA operations surfaced at either

The disclosure this winter and spring that the CIA has been bankrolling labor unions, student associations and a variety of other groups shocked and offended him.

Fulbright bridled at the most common defense of the secret subsidies, that they were necessary because Congress would not openly provide the money to do things that needed doing.

"If Congress wouldn't approve it, we shouldn't have done it," he says, sounding a lot like Harry Truman.

He is troubled that the National Security Council turns out to have approved the network of subsidies.

"If it were just the CIA we could straighten this out," Fulbright explained. We would be a matter of getting an agency that was out of line, back into line.

"I'm beginning to believe there really is an Establishment that runs the country. What do you want Congress for if it doesn't have anything to do with the decisions? Is not Congress just supposed to be window-dressing to give people the impression that this is a democratic country?"

He is vexed that Congress has been little consulted by the CIA disclosures.

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FULBRIGHT has been shaken by a series of after-the-fact disclosures about CIA involvement in counter-revolutions and military coups.

He was concerned, he indicated, that the U.S. might have been involved in the military takeover in Greece.

He said he had no way of learning from the Administration or the CIA directly whether the United States had had a hand in the coup.

"That's unusual at all," he said. "The President doesn't usually tell you these things unless you're with him all down the line.

Continued

George (Sen. Walter George of Georgia, Foreign Relations chairman in 1955 and 1956) had that [illegible] with Eisenhower. They agreed on everything and he knew everything that was going on, But I don't think they've ever called you up and told you what they were up to if they knew you wouldn't like it."

* * *

FULBRIGHT COMPLAINS, as do many critics of U.S. foreign policy, that the United States regularly comes down on the side of entrenched power against revolutionaries who are trying to improve the lot of the common man in the underdeveloped nations.

This reality is hidden, in his view, by the romantic notion that the United States remains a revolutionary nation itself.

Fulbright first split with President Johnson in September of 1965. The issue was not Vietnam but U.S. involvement in the Dominican Republic.

It was here, in the U.S. reaction to a revolution in what used to be called by gringos a banana republic, that Fulbright left the U.S. Establishment, probably forever.

Vietnam seemed, at least back then, a complicated intellectual problem. The U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic was, for Fulbright, unavoidably black and white.

After marshaling evidence on U.S. intervention, Fulbright told the Senate that he could not go along.

"The evidence is incontrovertible," he later wrote, "that American forces landed in Santo Domingo on April 28, 1965, not, as was and is officially contended, for the primary purpose of saving American lives, but for the primary if not the sole purpose of defeating the revolution, which, on the basis of fragmentary evidence and exaggerated estimates of communist influence, was judged to be either communist-dominated or certain to become so."

Fulbright also charges that Ambassador Tapley Bennett and other American officials in the Dominican Republic passed up chances to reduce or eliminate communist influence by encouraging the non-communist revolutionaries. The reason, Fulbright contends, is that these officials expected and favored victory by the right-wing anti-rebel forces.

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FULBRIGHT is an extraordinarily logical man, but there are big gaps in what he has to say about the Vietnam war.

The senator believes, for example, that the war is wrong — not just a little bit wrong but dreadfully, hideously wrong.

Just as his main concern about Bay of Pigs was that it might succeed, he now believes that the President is committed to "victory" in Vietnam and frets that it may be gained — before, or after, the Chinese intervene.

"My lord," he said, "how many troops will we have to tie down there to keep that country quiet? How long will they have to stay? And what kind of government will those people wind up with? What kind of an advertisement will that kind of a Vietnam be for all the other countries in Asia and Africa and Latin America?

"If we get into it with China, even if the Russians don't come in, where will it wind up? There are all those people, and they won't be as easy to sit on as they were in the old days. Can you imagine trying to occupy China?"

Fulbright was quietly supporting Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia as an effective counter[illegible] the Balkans when [illegible] informed Americans had trouble telling one communist from another.

Pinned down, Fulbright says now that Ho Chi Minh, the communist master of North Vietnam, shows every sign of becoming an Asian Tito if he ever gets breathing space.

"The parallels are there, in my opinion," he explains. "They are both communists. They both became the recognized leaders of their country in struggles against foreign domination."

* * *

ALTHOUGH his own deficiencies as a nationalist have rendered him personally and politically vulnerable, Fulbright believes that nationalism, not communism, is the more powerful force when the two collide.

He points to the Chinese break with Russia and to Ho's apparent standoffishness from China as evidence, as well as Tito's independent position.

"The United States is now involved in a sizeable and open-ended war against communism in the only country in the world which won freedom from colonial rule under communist leadership," the senator has written in "The Arrogance of Power", his brief against U.S. Vietnam policy.

"The basis of my criticisms of American policy in Southeast Asia and Latin America is a belief that American interests are better served by supporting nationalism than by opposing communism, and that when the two are encountered in the same political movement it is in our interest to accept a communist role in the government of the country concerned rather than to undertake the cruel and all but impossible task of suppressing a genuinely nationalist revolution. In Vietnam, we have allowed our fear of communism to make us once again the enemy of a nationalist revolution, and in that role we have wrought havoc."

THOUGH he has drawn away from saying so very bluntly, Fulbright has come to the view that communism, while personally noxious, is not all bad:

"The point I wish to make is not that communism is not a harsh and, to us, a repugnant system of organizing society, but that its doctrine has redeeming tenets of humanitarianism; that the worst thing about it is not its philosophy but its fanaticism; that history suggests the probability of an abatement of revolutionary fervor; that in practice fanaticism has abated in a number of countries, including the Soviet Union; that some countries are probably better off under communist rule than they were under the preceding regimes; that some people may even want to live under communism; that in general the United States has more to gain from the success of nationalism than from the destruction of communism; and finally . . . that it is neither the duty nor the right of the United States to sort out all these problems for the revolutionary and potentially revolutionary societies of Asia, Africa and Latin America."

Fulbright believes, and has stopped just short of saying publicly, that the United States is out to sell an unsaleable kind of democratic capitalism to an underdeveloped world which lacks the experience to make the democracy work and the capital to practice capitalism.

* * *

FULBRIGHT feels very strongly about these things. He conducts hearings to expose U.S. policy and actions in Asia and Latin America. He makes deploring speeches. He broods by day and tosses by night.

But, and this is a key to [illegible] he is not ready to do much more about them.

"I've made so many speeches that everyone is sick of hearing me," he said when asked what he planned to do to change U.S. policy.

"That's why I wrote the book. I was worried about overexposure in the speeches. I don't want to become a common scold.

"What can I do that I haven't done? How can I go about it?"

* * *

AT 62, Fulbright talks convincingly of the attractions of laying politics aside, though there is every sign that he will seek re-election in 1968.

But, he says: "I don't think I'd miss this all that much. There are some young fellows coming along who could do a good job for Arkansas." He mentions freshman Rep. David Pryor as a good example. "Times change, and you shouldn't try to hang on too long," he says.

When he does leave the Senate, Fulbright said, he wants "just to go back to Fayetteville and rest. Not do anything, at least for quite a while. Betty (his wife) thinks I wouldn't like it, and maybe she's right. I might wind up teaching somewhere, I suppose. But I'd like to try just watching the world go by. There's a lot I haven't got around to reading."

It is this quiescence, as much as a fear of political retribution, that keeps Fulbright from taking his case against the war to the country.

He is, by taste and temperament, a man of the Senate. It is within the Senate chamber and in the staidly respectable auditoriums of universities that he has leveled his critiques of the Vietnam war.

Fulbright reacts with something akin to shock when asked by young people whether they should serve in Vietnam.

"Of course you should," he told one of them. "That's what the law requires and the war is, after all, a national undertaking."

* * *

FULBRIGHT has not had a close call politically since he whupped Holy Homer and went to the Senate in 1944. Yet he has been walking on eggs for a decade, and he knows that 1968, when he is up for re-election, could be the toughest fight he has ever had.

He is famous for his lack of contact with the state between elections.

He makes four to a dozen speeches around the state each year and spends a few weeks quietly at Fayetteville.

The bar association at Little Rock scored on him a few years ago with a gridiron skit which pictured Fulbright as being forced down at Little Rock by engine trouble, imagining himself in some poverty stricken foreign land and ordering up bags of AID money.

He doesn't campaign conventionally, either. His 1961 pre-campaign tour was one of the most extraordinary in the history of American politics.

Orval Faubus, still the hero of the red necks for the Little Rock crisis he had created in 1957, was thinking about running against him. Segregationism swept the outlands and Birchism the few cities the state has.

Fulbright talked, quietly, patiently, from one end of Arkansas to the other, displaying a patient eagerness to be understood, about everything from the training of Yugoslav pilots in the United States to the Monroe Doctrine.

An Arkansas editor remarked that it was like trying to keep school while going over Niagara Falls in a barrel. He added that no one could say whether Fulbright adopted [illegible] **from choice or necessity, whether it was the will to demagog he lacked, or the ability.**

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But the lectures worked. Faubus took a poll early in 1962 which showed that he could get about 40 percent of the vote contesting with Fulbright the latter's 60 percent if he ran for re-election as governor.

Faubus ran for governor.

Fulbright trounced a right-wing barnburner in the Democratic primary and a right-wing bone surgeon in the general election.

FAUBUS, who was governor until he stepped aside last January, would still like be a senator. He'll be taking another poll early in 1968.

Fulbright, for his part, will be making another of his lecture tours this fall.

Sidney S. McMath, a two-term governor and before that a Marine Corps hero, is so upset by Fulbright's doveish coos that he is making speeches around the state and threatening to run for the Senate, too.

Fulbright wryly notes that any effort President Johnson might decide to make on behalf of either man would be likely to backfire.

Johnson is unpopular in Arkansas for his civil rights and Great Society programs as well as for the less definable sins of style which have clouded his prospects elsewhere. Many of the state's more militant Negroes are unhappy with him because of the war.

A vote for Fulbright will be one way to rebuke the President.

Arkansans are a clannish lot and resent outside criticism. Attacks on Faubus during his tumultuous years as a segregationist activist apparently helped re-elect him. Fulbright, who is under attack by every jingoist in the country, could benefit in much the same way.

FULBRIGHT has an indifferent memory for names and is less well acquainted in his constituency than most politicians.

Fulbright's staff work has often been incredibly lax. An Arkansas agricultural stabilization and conservation committee that invited him to speak at its annual dinner got a tersely polite refusal weeks after the meeting had been held.

It's extremely unlikely that Fulbright could have survived and come to flower in a more democratic state with two-party politics and election campaigns run on economic issues. In Michigan for example, the UAW could be expected to have him for breakfast.

What Fulbright does that few of his colleagues do as much of is think. Arkansas' oligarchic political structure has given him time to do that.

Now Arkansas is changing, and Fulbright would be facing new challenges even if he hadn't taken on the President and American public opinion on an issue so flammable as war.

The Negro vote is growing, as is the popular vote generally and true two-party politics are at the bud.

The state has its first Republican governor, Winthrop Rockefeller, and real issues like education are coming to the fore.

If Fulbright wants to survive, he will have to spend less time worrying about things that interest him and more time worrying about things that interest his constituents.

* * *

IN 1946, Fulbright himself decided that "there certain interests, or prejudices, of (a politician's) constituents which are dangerous to trifle with."

"Some of these prejudices may not be of fundamental importance to the welfare of the nation, in which case he is justified in humoring them, even though he may disapprove. The difficult case is where the prejudice concerns fundamental policy affecting national welfare."

The senator cited the poll-tax as an issue which wasn't fundamental and on which he wouldn't argue with the people who elected him. But isolationism was a policy so important that he would fight it regardless of the political consequences.

He has often recited this position since. One is left to infer that giveaways to oil men and Arkansas race relations have not seemed fundamental issues to Fulbright while foreign policy has.

Fulbright's position on racial problems has satisfied almost no one, probably not even himself.

* * *

AT LITTLE ROCK, Daily Bates, the leader of the Negro community, used to chastise him as a moral coward and white-collar segregationist. J. R. English, an accountant who served as resident agent for the Ku Klux Klan, used to dismiss Fulbright as "Senator Halfbright."

When Faubus ringed Central High School with National Guardsmen and defied the courts—to set off the Little Rock crisis of 1957—Fulbright declined to get involved.

Contrasting Fulbright's courage in facing McCarthy with his quiescence on Faubus, Richard H. Rovere, the McCarthy expert, concluded that "there is a demagogue for every man to fear."

Fulbright is not, as so many of his Yankee admirers would like to believe, an enlightened racial liberal bending to the wishes of a benighted constituency. He might best be described as a mild and enlightened racist without a gram of bigotry in his bony frame.

"I still think we went at equality wrong-end to," Fulbright says. "We should have started with education and health, so the Negro would be more equal to the white and better able to compete with him."

* * *

FULBRIGHT finds it impossible to "bend" on any important issue in the way his apologists would like to believe. The small hypocrisies which are the stuffing of many politicians are simply unavailable to him.

This means that he must find agreement in his own mind with Arkansans on issues that seem important to them. It seems likely that without this failing he would have come along to the enlightened equalitarianism that is becoming general among Southerners of conscience. But the failing is there, and Fulbright keeps his intellectual house in order even if it means that Negroes continue in his mind to sit below the salt.

Fulbright does not understand that other people practice hypocrisy, and that almost everyone in public life is suspected of it. This has got him into trouble from time to time, most recently when he explained to a reporter that the warhawks in Congress tend to represent constituencies heavily dependent on defense expenditures.

Fulbright cited Sen. Richard B. Russell of Georgia, Sen. Henry M. Jackson of Washington and Rep. L. Mendel Rivers of South Carolina as examples of the breed. He was distressed to find that his remarks had got into print, and issued an apology.

He did not, as almost any other denizen of the District of Columbia would have done, claim that he had been misquoted. He is said privately to have grumbled that he was talking off the record.

Fulbright is too good a clubman to attack colleagues [illegible] Senators and Congressmen. It seems to him natural and probably inevitable that politicians from states where defense is important should feel the need for more and more defense expenditures.

After all, he is a big booster for chicken and rice, two important Arkansas products.

* * *

THE WAY of the critic of a national war is hard.

The word from Oregon, from Idaho and from everywhere else they flutter from is that the Senate's doves are in trouble politically.

Fulbright is hitting back the best he can.

The war, he told an Arkansas audience a few weeks ago, is costing every two weeks the $1.2 billion that the government will spend over a decade to develope the Arkansas River.

He is moving toward a sort of despairing isolationism — a view that the United States had just as well let the rest of the world go hang because it fouls up so badly when it gets involved overseas.

He wants, he says, for the United States to win the minds of men by example, the creation of a free and affluent republic at home, rather than by manipulation abroad.

This view, with its promise of goodies for all, could be a strong campaign position in a poor state like Arkansas.

But, says one of the old pols who lounges in the lobby of Little Rock's Hotel Marion, "Bill had better get in shape for it if he thinks he can make a run against Yankee Doodle Dandy and the Spirit of 76."

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